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helping parents teach young children

a guide for home economics
program assistants



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helping parents teach young children



We want to teach parents some things that will help children enjoy childhood more. These things will also make it easier for children to learn when they start to school. We want to show parents that they are important as teachers of their preschool children. We can help them get more satisfaction from being parents.

THE LESSONS.

Here are five lessons for parents of babies, toddlers, and preschool children. You can make these lessons fit the people you work with. You can teach the lessons in a series of meetings for parents. Or you might use one lesson along with lessons on other subjects, like house cleaning. Or pick out an idea from these to use at another kind of meeting for parents.

This booklet has two parts. The first tells you some things about how children learn. It also gives ideas for working with people. The second part shows you how to teach the lessons. There will be leaflets for parents, too. You can give them these as you teach each lesson.

the reason why

It is important for preschool children to learn by feeling, touching, seeing, hearing, and tasting many different things. Some parents do not know this. Children need to learn these things before they go to school. Then they learn better when they get to school.

Children need to know about different sizes and shapes and how to sort things by size and shape. They need to know about colors and get some ideas about numbers.

Children need experience with picture books and stories. This makes them interested in reading.

Children need experiences with art and music. They need to learn about their neighborhood and town.

It is important for young children to talk about what they see and do. They need a chance to explore and try ideas. Practice in handling things around them gives children confidence in themselves.

School work builds on what they have learned during their first 6 years. Children with a wide variety of experiences have a head start when they go to school.

how children learn at home

Children learn from parents and the world around them. Some things are simple and easy to teach. Many parents give children these experiences without thinking about it. They may not know that they are really teaching their children. Other parents don't understand how important this is. We can help them.

How do parents give these experiences? They teach about numbers when they play counting games with children, say nursery rhymes, and when they talk with children. Children learn about colors when they see them in dishes, clothes, pictures, and other things around the house. Parents talk to children about color when they talk about different objects: the red wagon, the blue bowl, the yellow flowers, and the green chair.

Children learn about shapes and sizes as they see different kinds of shapes in their toys and around the house. They learn how to sort things into different groups while they help mother with the housework. For example, children sort the spoons and put them in one place. They put the forks and knives in another place.

Parents get children to like reading when they show picture books and read to them.

Parents teach children to act in certain ways and to try new things by using rewards and punishments. For example, baby makes his first sounds. He is rewarded when mother smiles at

him and talks to him. This approval teaches him to try again. If a toddler reaches for a hot pan, mother shakes her head, says "no, no," or slaps his hand. Disapproval teaches him not to touch certain things. If there are too many "no's" and not enough rewards, he may be afraid to try new things.

Children want to learn, but learning doesn't just come naturally. Children have to be taught. Parents are their first and most important teachers.

working with people

You will be working with many people as you help parents teach their children. Here are some guides.

YOUR FEELING ABOUT PEOPLE MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN THE WAY THEY ACT.

People know when:

- you care about them.
- you understand and accept their reasons for doing things their way.
- you believe that each person does the very best he can.
- you believe you can learn from them.
- you know how hard life can be.

People change when:

- they want to please someone who cares for them.
- they can see "what's in it for them."
- they can see some hope for the future.

If you believe people are important, you will:

- learn names and greet the mothers by name.
- learn about their children.
- give them a chance to know each other.
- help them become a part of the group.

- give them a chance to talk together and do things together.
- avoid asking direct questions which may put people on the spot.
- watch for signs and fit your teaching to the needs of the group.
- care more about what the people want to learn than sticking to your lesson plan.



meetings

HOME VISITS ARE IMPORTANT.

Visit homes before you plan meetings. Your visit to a family will be the first step in becoming a friend. It will also show you how this family lives so you can be more practical in your teaching. You will get to know the children and what they need. This will help you plan how to care for children while mothers are at meetings.

After you visit several homes, plan your meeting. Then go back to those homes for a second visit. This will give you a chance to tell parents where the meeting will be held. Tell parents who will be there, and what you plan to do. Tell how children will be cared for at the meeting. This will make

mothers and children less afraid to come to a strange place.

AT THE CLOSE OF YOUR VISIT, TALK WITH THE MOTHER ABOUT HOW SHE WILL GET TO THE MEETING. ENCOURAGE HER TO BRING A FRIEND.

YOUR MEETING PLACE SETS THE STAGE.

Choose a meeting place that is easy to get to and where people will feel good about coming.

Arrange your room so people can feel close to one another and see each other when they talk. Around a table is good.

See that your group is as comfortable as possible. Think about fresh air, light, and comfortable chairs.

Show how to make a room attractive using things that don't cost anything. For example, make a vase from a plastic bottle and fill it with leaves, flowers, or bare branches. Hang magazine pictures, children's drawings, or paintings on the walls.

HOW YOU TEACH MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN HOW AND WHAT PEOPLE LEARN.

People are likely to learn and to enjoy trying out new things when:

- they are in small groups.
- they like the teacher and feel the teacher cares about them.
- they feel they belong and are among friendly people.

They learn better when you follow these steps:

- Tell how to do something, and show how to do it.
- Let them practice doing it.
- Help them when they need it—when they get stuck, or make mistakes.
- Give them approval as they make progress.

- Help them understand how the learning will make their work easier, their money go further, or their children more ready for school.
- Plan with them how they will try the new learning at home.

CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS.

Provide for the care of children of the mothers at the meetings. Sometimes volunteers will do this. Or someone can be hired to be with the children.

Plan the child care so that it will be a good experience for the children. Children need toys to play with and experience with paints, color crayons, and pasting. Books, reading, and storytelling should be an important part of the child care.

Make a name tag for each child and pin it on him with a safety pin. When you print his name, show him how. Most children enjoy wearing a name tag. It also helps the person caring for the children to learn names. In case some child may not want a name tag, put it aside. Tell him he can get it if he decides he wants to wear it later.

Does your group meet in a church or a school? The church nursery or the kindergarten room can be used as a play center for the children. You can arrange for a room near the place where the mothers will be meeting. The room should be warm, airy, and light. Toilets should be nearby.

SUPPLIES YOU WILL NEED.

If you need to bring supplies for each meeting, here are some good ones. They serve the purpose and are lightweight and easy to store.

- Low boxes, stools, small chairs, rugs or blankets for children to sit on.



- Low tables where children can work. A board with a box under each end can be used for a table or a bench.



- Furniture for a housekeeping corner. Turn cardboard or wooden boxes upside down to use as tables and stoves. You can stack them on top of each other to use for cupboards. Boxes can also be used as doll beds.
- Mirror
- Dishes, pans, lids
- Dressup clothes—hats, purses, aprons, dresses for girls; coats, jackets, hats, lunch pails for boys.
- Dolls, blankets, and doll clothes.
- Art supplies: crayons, newsprint, magazines to use for cutting, paste, blunt scissors, modeling dough.

RECIPE FOR PASTE

Mix together—

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup cold water

Add 1 cup boiling water. Cook until clear. Put in plastic squeeze bottles for use.

RECIPE FOR MODELING DOUGH

Mix together—

2 cups flour

1 cup salt

Mix food coloring in $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water.

Add to the flour and salt. Mix and add enough water to make dough that does not stick to hands.

- Books. From a library, borrow picture books suitable to the ages of the children.



- A box of empty spools. Paint spools a variety of colors with lead-free paint. Include shoestrings or twine. Tie one end of the string around one spool to give a start for stringing the spools.
- Cans of different sizes. Choose cans that fit one inside the other. Paint the cans different colors. Be sure the edges of the cans are smooth.



- Clothespins. Children can put clothespins around the edges of the cans.



- Newspapers. Fold to make hats, boats, trains, airplanes.
- Materials. Include the materials suggested in the lessons for parents.

ARRANGING THE PLAY CENTER.

Put the toys and equipment you have in different parts of a room. Put the dressup and housekeeping things in one corner. Put some paper and crayons on a table in another part of the room. Put the books on a low box or table so children may look at them.

When you put playthings in different places, you encourage the children to play in small groups.

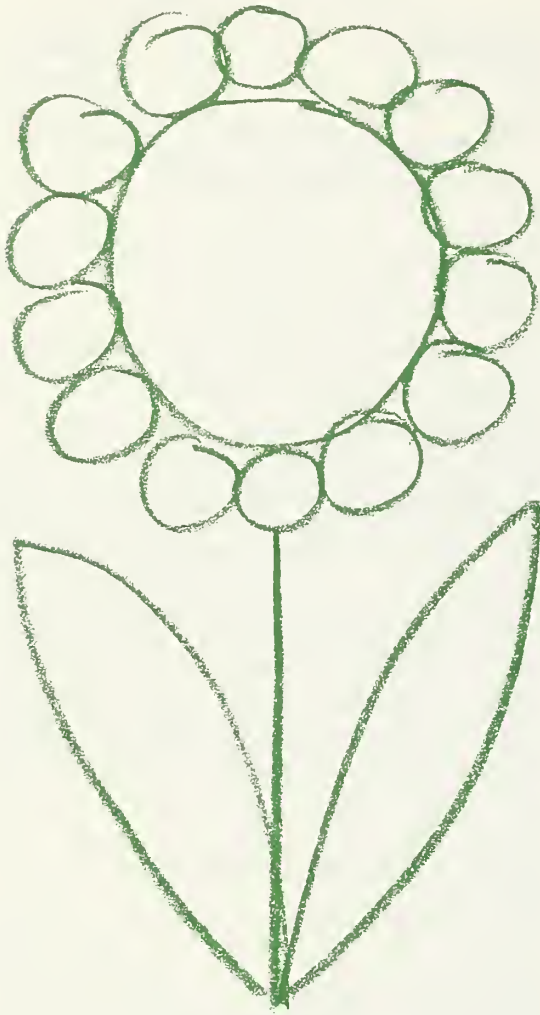
PEOPLE YOU WILL NEED.

The people who care for children should be warm and friendly and should *like* children. A former school teacher or a Sunday school teacher will have had experience with children in groups. Older boys and girls in the community might help out. Some elderly men and women may enjoy reading to the children and watching them play. Help them take part where they are best suited.

How many people will you need to care for the children? That will depend on the number and age of the children and the kind of room. How close is it to the toilets and to the room where the mothers are meeting? Try to have at least two adults with a group of children.

SECTION II

LESSONS FOR PARENTS



fun with circles, lesson 1

This lesson is planned to show mothers how to use circles made from cardboard:

- to make a hanging toy for a baby to look at
- to play a game with a baby
- to make a pull-toy for a toddler
- to make a drop-box for a toddler
- to give a toddler experience with color
- to teach children about differences in size
- to teach children to group circles according to size

- to teach children colors
- to teach children how to count.

Give each mother a copy of the leaflet *Fun With Circles*.

how you do the meeting

—WHAT YOU NEED TO TAKE ALONG TO THE MEETING.

1. Red, yellow, and blue cardboard
2. Pencils
3. String
4. Scissors
5. Sticks or clothes hangers for hanging toy
6. A knife to cut the slit in the box to make the drop-box
7. Boxes for toddlers to drop circles in
8. Boxes or envelopes to take the material home
9. A supply of leaflet, *Fun With Circles*, for the mothers
10. A pattern to draw circles in three different sizes. Make your pattern from things mothers have at home, such as cans, jar lids, or soft drink bottles. Do not use a compass or any gadget that mothers won't have. Show the mothers the lids or bottles you used to make the pattern. Be sure circles are big enough so a child can't swallow them.

WHAT YOU DO FIRST.

When the first two mothers come, ask them to help you. Show them how to draw circles on the cardboard. Use the patterns you have made. Watch them. Show easier ways to do. Help them over any trouble spots.

Reward them with a smile, a nod, or a word of approval. Ask the next mothers who come to cut out the circles that the first mothers drew. Show them how. If the cardboard is hard to cut, tell them "it may be hard to do." Tell them that some circles

may not come out right, but it doesn't really matter. Watch to see if they can do it; help them over hard spots. Reward them with approval.

Show how you made the patterns from the models.

WHAT YOU SAY FIRST WHEN YOU START THE MEETING.

Ask the mothers about their children. How many babies? How many have children between the ages of 2 and 6?

How many have school age children? If you think some may have grandchildren, ask about them, too.

TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO THIS DAY. YOU COULD SAY: Children start to learn a long time before they go to first grade. They start to learn as babies. They learn when they hear sounds or see things. They learn when they touch and taste and smell different things.

They learn each day of their lives. Children learn when they play with toys. They learn when they explore their home and nearby places. They learn from their parents and older brothers and sisters.

Children don't learn by themselves. Parents need to teach children. Parents are the most important teachers a child ever has. There are lots of things parents can do with children to make it easier for them to get along in school.

Today we are going to use circles to show how to teach children. This will help them learn about colors, numbers, and sizes. It teaches them how to sort things by color and size. You can use many other things around the house to teach this.

SHOW MOTHERS HOW TO USE CIRCLES.

Show how to make a hanging toy, a

pull-toy, and a drop-box. Have each mother make at least one thing.

Play each of the circle games with the group to show how.

Talk about other ways they can teach their children about colors, numbers, and sizes.

FOLLOWUP.

Ask each mother to try these things with her children. Ask her to see how many different ways the children use the circles.

PLAN FOR NEXT MEETING.

Discuss plans for the next meeting. Ask each person to bring a paper sack.





learning through touch, lesson 2 This lesson is to show mothers how to teach children about textures. Mothers will learn how to:

- use materials they can find at home to teach children.
- teach children the meaning of different words, such as smooth, soft, hard, rough, heavy, and light.

Give each mother a copy of the leaflet, *Learning Through Touch*.

how you do the meeting

—WHAT YOU NEED TO TAKE ALONG.

1. Paper sack for each mother
2. Pieces of cloth with different textures—silk, wool, cotton
3. Pieces of cotton
4. Pieces of sponge
5. Pieces of sandpaper
6. Pieces of cardboard
7. Pieces of carpeting
8. Other materials that feel soft or hard, rough or smooth
9. Shoe box or other small cardboard box for each mother
10. Glue or paste
11. Scissors
12. Paper towels
13. Rocks

14. Nuts

15. Twigs

16. A supply of leaflet, *Learning Through Touch*, for the mothers.

WHAT YOU DO FIRST.

Have two or three boxes of odds and ends of things that have a different texture. Ask the first mothers who come to put one of each type in a sack.

Visit with the first mothers who come. Learn if they used the circles they made at the first meeting. How did they use them? Use what they tell you as you visit with the group.

When you visit ahead of time, you learn how to use the mothers' experience to start them talking.

Ask questions and give attention to those who have tried out new things. This way you give approval and reward to them. It makes them feel that their ideas are important.

Be sure you don't sound like you are checking up on them. Ask your questions so people feel good that they did something. Help people save face by saying, "Did you *have time* to play any of the games?" instead of "Did you play any of the games?"

WHAT TO SAY.

Spend the first part of the meeting visiting about the circles you made the last time. For example, "Last time we made some circles for children to play with and some hanging toys for babies to look at.

"Mrs. _____ said her youngsters threw the circles in the air.

"Did any of your youngsters use them this way?

"Mrs. _____ said her children didn't like them.

"How did your children like them?

"Did you have time to play any of the games with your children?

"It is hard to tell the different

sized circles apart. Did the children have trouble with this?"

After you talk about the different ways children used the circles, you might say that:

- each child is different
- some like one thing, some like another
- some things are hard for one child and easy for another.

TELL WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO TODAY.

Children learn by touching and feeling many different things. Sometimes this is hard for mothers because children touch things they shouldn't. In a store children may want to handle things that belong to other people. Mothers need to teach children not to touch things that don't belong to them. At the same time, children need some things they can touch.

Today, we are going to play some games. These show how different things feel. We are also going to make a treasure box of things to touch and feel. You can take it home to your children.

HOW TO DO IT.

Play the guessing game. Give mothers practice in playing this guessing game. Have mothers pretend they are children. Give each mother a sack with different things in it. Write her name on the sack or have her write her own name on it.

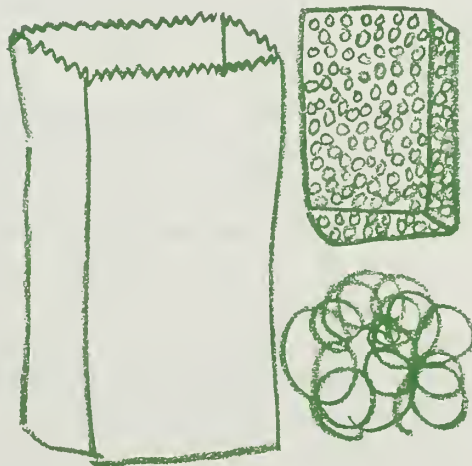
Tell mothers to close their eyes. Have them reach in the sack and find something soft. Ask them to take the object out. Have them say what it is they found by saying "I found something soft" or "I found something hard." Show what it is. Keep on playing the game by asking them to

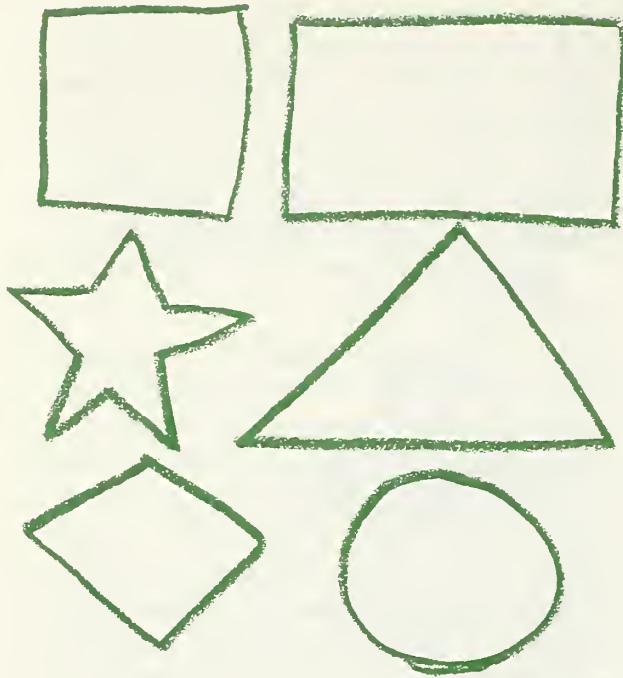
find something hard, rough, or smooth. Talk about playing the game at home with the children. Explain that these are good games to help children of 3 years or older. They learn to say "I" at the start of a sentence. Most children have a hard time learning to say "I" instead of "me." This game is a way to help them.

Make a box of "touch" treasures. Use a shoe box or other small box. Paste different textured things on the inside of the box. Paste some on the bottom and some on the sides. Use pieces of carpet, sandpaper, paper towel, cardboard with ridges, cotton, sponges, and different pieces of cloth. Give each mother a box. Have her paste different things inside it. Let her take the box home if she wants to. Suggest that she make other boxes at home. The older children can make boxes for the little ones.

PLAN FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

Talk about plans for the next meeting. Ask the mothers to bring scraps of cloth from home.





learning different shapes, lesson 3

This lesson is to show mothers how to:

- teach children the shape of a square, triangle, rectangle, circle, star, and diamond
- make a flannel board for their children
- teach children to match shapes and colors

Give each mother a copy of the leaflet *Learning Different Shapes*.

how you hold the meeting

WHAT YOU NEED TO TAKE ALONG.

1. Heavy paper in red, blue, and yellow. You'll need enough paper to make four 3-inch squares. Use red, blue, and yellow paper. You will need one sheet of 9"×11" paper in each color for each mother.
2. Red, yellow, and blue crayons
3. Scissors

4. Flannel—you'll need enough to give each mother a piece about 12"×18"
5. Darning needles
6. Colored yarn or string
7. Nails or something else with a sharp point
8. Heavy cardboard about 12"×18" (the side of a box)
9. Scraps of cloth in various colors. Have some smooth and some rough.
10. Patterns for each mother
11. A supply of leaflet *Learning Different Shapes* for the mothers.

WHAT YOU DO FIRST.

Show the first mothers who come how to make the squares. When other mothers come, have them cut the different shapes out of cloth. Use patterns for the different shapes.

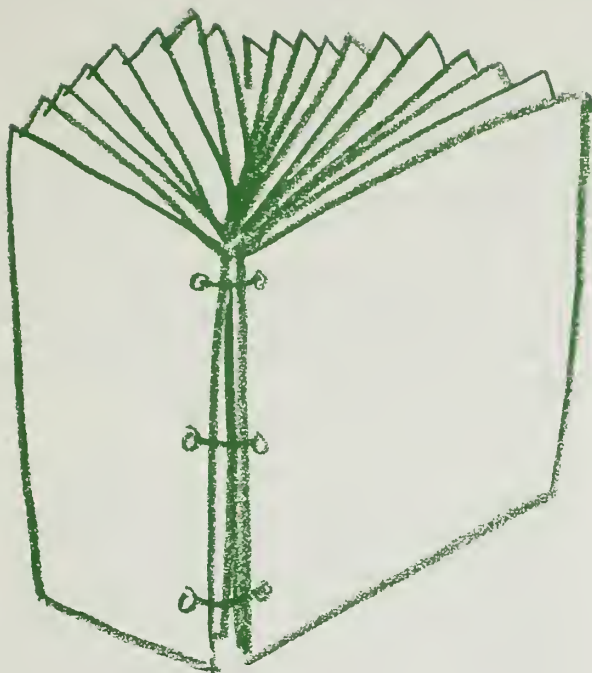
Visit with the mothers about the textured things they made last time. Did the children like them? Did the children find other materials that had a different touch to them?

WHAT YOU SAY AS YOU START THE MEETING.

It's important for children to learn to match shapes and colors. Learning how to do this helps get children ready to read. Today we're going to make some games you can use with children. These will help them learn about sizes and shapes.

SHOW HOW TO DO IT.

- Show how to make the flannel board game and help each mother make one.
- Show how to color the mimeographed sheets.
- Show how to make the triangles from the pattern.
- Have each mother make a flannel board game and triangle game.



books for children, lesson 4

This lesson is planned to show mothers how:

- to make picture books
- to make picture cards
- to use books and cards with children
- to write a story for a child

Give each mother a copy of the leaflet *Books for Children*.

how you do the meeting

—WHAT YOU NEED TO TAKE ALONG FOR THE MEETING.

1. Manila folders—at least one for each mother
2. Glue or paste
3. Magazines
4. Scissors
5. String
6. Cardboard (dress or suit boxes provide a good weight cardboard)
7. Scratch pads—approximately 4" × 6"
8. Flour and water for homemade paste
9. Nail or something sharp
10. Pencils
11. A supply of leaflet *Books for Children* for the mothers.

WHAT YOU DO FIRST.

- Give the magazines to the first mothers who come.
- Ask them to cut out pictures they think children would enjoy.
- Visit with the mothers about the triangle games they made the last time.
- Did the children like playing with triangles? Did they use the triangles in other ways?

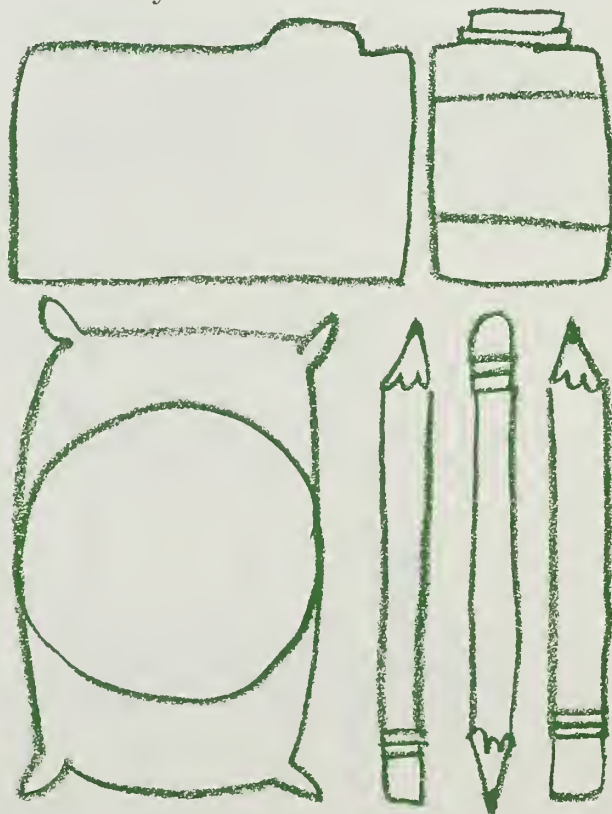
WHAT YOU SAY AS YOU START THE MEETING.

Visit about the last meeting. Use any ideas you learned in talking with the first mothers.

TALK ABOUT TODAY'S MEETING.

It's important for children to learn about books. Children can learn from looking at pictures and talking about them. You can help children learn to turn the pages without tearing them.

Today we're going to make some books for you to take home.



SHOW MOTHERS HOW TO MAKE A BOOK.

Choose pictures Show some books for children:

- point out ways to combine pictures
- show kinds of pictures that children like.

Show some pictures from magazines. Explain why you chose certain pictures:

- color
- appeal to children
- story the picture tells
- things for children to learn.

Make a book using manila folders. Paste the pictures on each side of a manila folder.

Use a homemade paste. Uncooked paste—mix flour and water together. Cooked paste—mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cold water with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour, add 1 cup boiling water and cook until clear. Cut the folder to fit the pictures you are using.

Make a book using cardboard. Use pieces of light-weight cardboard for the pages.

Paste the pictures on the cardboard. Punch holes in the cardboard.

Tie the pages together with string.

Be sure to tie the string so the pages will turn.

Make picture cards. Paste pictures on pieces of cardboard.

SHOW MOTHERS HOW TO USE THE BOOKS.

Show the mothers how to use the books and cards with the children.

Point out the different colors and things in a picture.

Tell them to ask their child to:

- find something yellow or green or whatever colors are in the picture
- make the sounds of animals, cars, trucks that are in the picture
- find things that are alike in the picture
- find things that are different
- ask the child to tell about the pictures

Write a story for a child. Explain that children of 2 years or older love to have stories about themselves.

Show how to write a simple story. Use simple drawings like these. Help mothers write stories about their children. Use very few words. Use paper from the scratch pad. Fold it like a book or a letter. Make this fun, with mothers helping one another. You may need to give a lot of help. This may be a new experience to them.





teach children to listen, lesson

5 This lesson is planned to help parents learn how to teach children to listen. You can do this if you talk with parents when you work with them in their homes. Or you may meet with parents in groups.

WHAT YOU DO FIRST.

Talk to the mothers about these facts . . .

Many children grow up in crowded, noisy homes. Sometimes they don't learn how to listen. They don't know the difference between sounds. They learn to shut out sounds. They get in the habit of not listening when parents talk to them. This habit makes parents mad and causes trouble at home. It makes it hard for children to listen to the teacher at school.

The child makes mistakes because he doesn't know what parents and teachers want. This hurts his self-respect. It makes him think he can't do anything right. Parents don't realize how important it is to talk and listen to their children.

Give each mother a copy of the leaflet *Talk and Listen*.

WHAT TO SAY.

Explain to the mothers what is said in the leaflet you gave them. Here is what you might tell them: Children will learn to listen if you . . .

- Get their attention before you speak. You can do this if you say a child's name. Wait for him to answer before you speak. Touch a child before you talk to him. It will save time in the long run.
- Be his size. Stoop or squat beside the small child. Look him in the eye when you talk to him. When you do this, you can tell if he understands.
- Speak in a quiet voice. Children learn to listen when you speak in a quiet voice. Whisper to children sometimes so they have to listen. They like this. It teaches them to control their voices.
- Pay attention when children are talking. If parents don't listen to children, it is hard to teach children to listen. When parents listen, they show that listening is important. Children know parents care about them when they listen. It makes children feel good when people listen to them.
- Talk with children. Talking to children helps them learn to listen. Talk about what you see and hear on radio and TV. Ask children about school. Talk about what you see on the streets, in the park, or other places you go.



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